

**THE HEART OF THE  
CREEDS, HISTORICAL  
RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF  
MODERN THOUGHT**

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The heart of the creeds, historical religion in the light of modern thought by Arthur Wentworth Eaton

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**ARTHUR WENTWORTH EATON**

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# THE HEART OF THE CREEDS

HISTORICAL RELIGION IN THE LIGHT  
OF MODERN THOUGHT

BY

ARTHUR WENTWORTH EATON

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SECOND EDITION

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NEW YORK AND LONDON  
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1889

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ARTHUR WENTWORTH H. EATON  
1888

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
New York

TO THE  
CHERISHED MEMORY OF TWO WHO HAVE GONE FROM EARTH

MY MOTHER

ANNA AUGUSTA WILLOUGHBY HAMILTON  
EATON

AND MY FRIEND

ELISHA MULFORD, LL.D.

I dedicate this book





## PREFACE.

In my ministry I have continually felt the need of some book which, in a clear and concise way, should put before people the rational theology of the early Church and of the best thinkers of our own time, and in so doing set forth the undisputed religious principles which make the basis of the Creeds and Institutions of historical Christianity.

This book, which I have dedicated to her from whom I learned my first lessons of reverence for divine truth, and to the master of thought, whose friendship I was privileged to share in later life, tries to make clear the universal meaning in the rites and symbols of the historic Faith, since, before the Christian conscience can be delivered from narrow doubts and Christian society from strifes and divisions, men must learn to discriminate fairly between what is necessary and what is accidental in religion. Writing it I have had in mind, chiefly

the large class of young thinkers among the laity who, like myself, have often been sorely puzzled by the contradictions, and misled by the mistakes of popular theology, and to whom early Christian thought is little known.

There are books like Caird's "Philosophy of Religion," Mulford's "Republic of God," Maurice's "Theological Essays" and other writings, Munger's "Freedom of Faith," Prof. Allen's "Continuity of Christian Thought," Dean Stanley's "Christian Institutions," Hatch's "Growth of Church Institutions," and R. E. Bartlett's Bampton Lectures for 1888, which are accessible to all. In these books the scientific basis and broader aspects of religion are ably and fully shown, and in their scholarly and reverent teachings many thoughts here briefly indicated will be found in more expanded form.

BOSTON, Easter Week, 1888.

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"Below the surface stream, shallow and light,  
Of what we say we feel; below the stream,  
As light, of what we *think* we feel, there flows,  
With noiseless current, strong, obscure, and deep,  
The central stream of what we feel indeed."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

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